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SUBJECT: LIBERTAS LEADER TO STAND IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

REF: DUBLIN 334 AND PREVIOUS

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary: Declan Ganley, founder of Libertas, has announced his candidacy for the June 2009 European Parliament election in Ireland. While sharply criticizing the Irish government for mismanaging the economy and supporting the Lisbon Treaty, Ganley himself has come under pressure for refusing to reveal the source of funds Libertas used to successfully campaign against the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008. Ganley has initiated the Libertas campaign with a big splash in the press, but it remains to be seen whether he can turn his rhetoric into votes. End summary.

[12.](#) (U) On March 14, Declan Ganley announced his candidacy for June's European Parliament elections in the Ireland North-West constituency. Ganley, chairman of Rivada Networks, a U.S. defense contractor specializing in military telecom systems, is the founder of Libertas, which he hopes to turn into a Europe-wide party (reftel). Ganley's first foray into big-time politics occurred when Libertas successfully campaigned against the Lisbon Treaty referendum in Ireland in June 2008. Subsequently, Ganley registered Libertas as a political party and intends to target up to 100 seats in the European elections in a bid to become the first "real political party" in European politics. Libertas has hired Joe Trippi, who ran Howard Dean's fundraising campaign in 2004, to develop its internet fundraising strategy.

[13.](#) (U) Ganley has already gone on the political offensive. While the Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen was meeting President Obama in the White House on March 17, Ganley accused the Irish government of "betraying the Irish people." He said "our Taoiseach (Prime Minister) is taking a breather from mismanagement of the economy to sell the Irish to the highest bidder." Ganley attacked the record of the main (pro-Lisbon) Irish parties, stating that, "All of them want to raise your taxes, leaving you with less money to spend, leaving businesses with less income, and deepening the recession." He continued, saying that, "We have to wake up in this country and realize that being in favor of Europe does not mean being in favor of everything Brussels wants."

[14.](#) (U) Ganley has come under heavy criticism for not revealing Libertas's funding sources in its anti-Lisbon Treaty campaign of June 2008. On March 13, the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPO) reported that Libertas had failed to provide adequate information over the funding of the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. Ganley had informed SIPO that he gave a personal loan of Euro 200,000 to help the anti-treaty campaign. However, further information sought by SIPO regarding the nature of the loan was not provided. The SIPO report also noted that it received no reply to its questions of whether Libertas received other loans and who was responsible for overseeing the group's political donations. In response to the report, Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheal Martin said he was "disappointed and concerned at the failure of Libertas to cooperate with the Commission." In a not-so-veiled swipe at Ganley, the Minister of State for Europe Dick Roche said there was "serious external interference" in the run-up to the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

[15.](#) (SBU) Comment: Ganley has initiated the Libertas campaign for the European Parliament election with a big splash in the press. However, it remains to be seen whether he can turn his rhetoric into

votes in June.

FAUCHER